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the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
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Address to the International Committee of the Red Cross

A number of international organisations sent the following address to the International Committee of the Red Cross, stressing the importance of the activity of this Committee. Among the organisations which have signed the address are:

The World's Y.W.C.A., the World's Alliance of Y.M.C.A.s, the World Council of Churches, Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, the World's Student Christian Federation, as well as Roman Catholic and Jewish organisations.

"At a recent meeting held in Geneva", says the address, "the representatives of the organisations mentioned stressed how advantageous the collaboration among them and the International Committee of the Red Cross had been during the war for the prisoners of war and persons living under similar conditions.

"They are convinced that a neutral organisation having its headquarters in a neutral country will be the most effective instrument for relief action to prisoners of war and persons living under similar conditions.

"Therefore, they ask the International Committee of the Red Cross whose constitution and general attitude highly facilitated this relief action, to continue its efforts in the same direction as in the past, and they promise their entire and whole hearted support."

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAIN

Flying Missionaries

A British plane has been ordered by the Missionary Aviation Fellowship to be used for missionary work abroad. Its first flight is planned for June when it will be used in a survey of mission stations in Central Africa. A second plane will be provided by the American branch of the Fellowship to join in the survey which hopes to establish a series of landing stations in Central Africa so that the planes can be used for inter-mission transport. E.P.S. Geneva

Heads of the Chaplains' Department in Washington Visit the World Council

On Sunday, May 4, 1947, the World Council headquarters in Geneva received a visit from four distinguished members of the Chaplains' Department of the United States Army:

General Luther Miller (Head of the Chaplains' Department in Washington), Colonel Paul Maddox (Senior Chaplain in the American Zone), Lieut.-Colonel Terrance Finnegan (Roman Catholic, Mediterranean theatre chaplain), and Colonel Poch (Missouri Synod Lutheran).

General Miller had visited - together with Colonel Martin Poch, head of the plans and training division of the chaplaincy - Germany, Austria, Holland, Luxemburg and France, for the purpose of inspecting military installations on the Continent and contacting the local clergy in occupied areas.

General Miller discussed with the heads of the Reconstruction Department of the World Council the possibility of closer coordination between the American chaplains in Europe and the Council's efforts to revitalise religious life in such nations as Germany.

After leaving Geneva, General Miller flew to Italy to visit army centres there. E.P.S. Geneva

EGYPT

Death of Baron Harold de Bildt

On April 27, 1947 the former Swedish ambassador, Baron Harold de Bildt, was buried in Cairo and an ecumenical memorial service was held in the Anglican Cathedral of All Saints. Baron de Bildt came into close touch with the ecumenical movement as long ago as 1925 at the World Church Conference in Stockholm, and devoted special attention to the Orthodox Patriarch in Alexandria, Photius. During the many years that he lived in Cairo as Ambassador, he played an illustrious part together with Bishop Gwynne in the foundation and promotion of that Egyptian ecumenical centre which cooperated so effectively in church and theological work with the representatives of the various Christian Churches, which in Egypt form an ecumenical world of their own of a special kind and with special tasks.

E.P.S. Geneva

SWITZERLAND

Coordination of Christian Peace Work

On April 26, 1947, in Olten a joint meeting was held of the Christian peace-groups in Switzerland, including the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches,, the Society of Friends, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Church Peace Society and the Knights of Peace, for the purpose of coordinating their efforts. The work for the full recognition of conscientious objectors is to be followed up, together with the establishment of alternative civilian service in Switzerland - a question which has already led to encouraging debate in the Swiss Parliament. A common centre of information is to be established and an attempt will be made to coordinate all action in the cause of peace through Christ.

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAIN

Present and Future Plans of the British Council of Churches

The British Council of Churches which met in Baptist Church House, London, on April 22 and 23, 1947 under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, endorsed the statement on "Human Rights and Religious Freedom" presented by the Joint Committee on Religious Liberty.

This statement asserted the individual's right of approach to God and of adherence to a religious body, and the right of a religious community to order its own worship and social life and to give open witness to the faith. It included a comprehensive charter of religious freedom and a review of the problem of religious minorities.

The statement, which has been published in the form of a 12-page pamphlet, will be submitted in due course to the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights by the Churches' Commission on International Affairs.

The Charter of Religious Freedom lists seven specific rights: freedom to choose one's religious beliefs and to change them if desired; to worship according to conscience and to educate, to propagate, to persuade, and to conduct social and charitable activities; to associate with others for these purposes; to acquire and hold property as a religious community; to have one's children educated, and to be guaranteed against legal provisions and administrative acts calculated to impose disabilities on grounds of religion.

The implications of these rights are fully elaborated, and the statement concludes by urging the British public to press for the formulation of a Declaration of Human Rights which would include as one of its cardinal articles the rights of all religious minorities to profess and practise their faith freely on terms of equality with religious majorities and with no disabilities.

During the next two years the British Council of Churches intends to concentrate on the task of bringing before Christians in Britain the issues which lie behind the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, so that individually and corporately, by study, prayer and action, they may come to a clearer vision of their own responsibility.

The Executive Committee of the British Council of Churches's proposals to secure closer cooperation between the departments of Faith and Order, Evangelism, Social Responsibility and International Friendship, and the similar standing committees or councils of the constituent denominations, were approved, and the Council agreed to extend the principle of direct representation on the Council to the Churches in Scotland, Wales and Ireland who have hitherto been represented through united Councils.

Cordial appreciation was expressed of the action of the Churches which have responded to the appeal for increased grants, and the appeal was renewed to those Churches which are still considering it.

E.P.S. Geneva

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Message of Christian Lay Leaders' Conference to the Churches

From April 10 to 14, 1947 a meeting took place at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey between representatives of those movements which are doing work among lay people in the different European countries. The following movements were represented: the Protestant Study Centre (Switzerland), the Foundation of Sigtuna (Sweden), the Professional Protestant Associations (France), "Kerk en Wereld" (Holland), the German Evangelical Academy (Germany), the Iona Community (Scotland), Aktinès (Greece). Two Hungarians took part in a private capacity. There were also representatives of the World Council of Churches, the Study Department of the World Council, and the World's Student Christian Federation.

The Conference issued a statement which was sent to the different Churches, drawing their attention to the importance of work among Christian lay people and to the results of the Bossey conference. The statement emphasised one fact which was evident to everyone: "the deep unity of basis and aim uniting all the national organisations represented. The question of the Church's relationship to the world was brought up, and of the tendency for lay people to leave the Church owing to the increase of secularisation.

"The movements represented have been trying to meet this situation. They realise that evangelisation in the world today can no longer confine itself to a mere statement of the Christian faith or an appeal to the sentiment, but that it should try to reach men through their real selves and through their daily problems. As these problems arise mainly within their professions, it is essentially through the professions that the movements have tried to act. By calling upon men of the same profession to study their special problems on the basis of the Christian faith, these movements have endeavoured:

"1. to show that the Lord of the Church is the Lord of their daily life and that the Gospel is an answer to their worries and their difficulties;

2. to remind Christians in the world that their attitude in the world, and the way in which they solve the problems of their professional life, are part of the witness which the Church should bear in society.

"From now on the fruits of this action in many countries deserve the closest attention."

The statement points out that the professional movements are only just beginning their work, but they intend to extend it and to keep in close touch with one another on an ecumenical basis. "It is very important that their efforts should receive the support and encouragement of the Churches.

"During the Conference it became clear that many of our difficulties arose from the gulf which too often separated pastors and laymen. One remedy suggested was to introduce ethical teaching into the theological Faculties, which would have far-reaching results on the preaching of the Church. We should like to share this suggestion with you."

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